

Project Update: December 2002

We organized 3 field trips (in summer, autumn and winter) in 2002. During these field trips we managed to investigate human influence on the habitat; to collect data to help us to determine precise figures on population size, certain population structure and biology of the birds (abundance, food, behaviour).

The habitat is strongly used for orchards and vineyards (see picture on left), which causes loss of many species of rare plants. High levels of poaching have led *Phasianus colchicus* and *Francolinus francolinus* (as well as other species of animals) to the verge of disappearance.

We had meetings with the local authorities in 3 villages (Aldara, Shvanidzor and Newvadi) located in the habitat of the dry subtropical region of Meghri. In the meetings we tried to explain the situation with biodiversity of the region and arranged for creation a special territory for conservation of some rare and endangered species of plants. Then we agreed with the regional TV station to organize broadcasting of a film about the biodiversity of the dry subtropical ecosystem of Meghri Region, which we have started shooting.

Land to be used for plant conservation

Next spring we plan to start creation of a model of a dry subtropical phrygana at the Centre for Biodiversity Conservation and collecting of plants, seeds, bulbs and birds for ex situ conservation.